



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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Ten arrested in U.S. and Dominican Republic in money laundering investigation *-- President of Boston money remitting company among those arrested --*

BOSTON, MA – Three Boston-area men appeared yesterday in federal court after their arrest on charges relating to money laundering, currency reporting offenses, and drug distribution in connection with a Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, money remitting business. Authorities in the Dominican Republic arrested seven additional suspects there in connection with the ongoing investigation.

U.S. Attorney Michael J. Sullivan, Bruce M. Foucart, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Kenneth W. Kaiser, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Douglas A. Bricker, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), announced today that Santo Melo, a/k/a “Puly,” age 48, of Roslindale, and president of **Boston Envio De Valores, Inc.**, (formerly El Puly Fashions, Inc., and Puly Envio De Valores, Inc.) a Jamaica Plain money remitting business located at 146A South Street, was charged in an indictment partially unsealed yesterday, with conspiracy to commit money laundering, two substantive counts of money laundering, and theft of government property.

Claudio Tejeda Andujar, a/k/a “Jose Rivera,” a/k/a “Dagoberto Lazocha,”³⁴ and Jose Garcia, 48, also were arrested on charges in the indictment. The indictment remains under seal with respect to a fourth defendant who has not yet been taken into custody. Tejeda Andujar, a partner in Boston Envio, is charged with money laundering conspiracy, four substantive money laundering counts, as well as with a conspiracy to distribute cocaine and two counts of distribution of cocaine. Garcia, a former employee of Boston Envio, faces ten counts of failure to report a cash transaction exceeding \$10,000.

The indictment alleges that between September 2004 and March 2006, Melo and Tejeda Andujar conspired to launder money that had been represented to them to be drug proceeds. The charges stem from a two-year ICE, FBI and IRS “sting” operation in which a cooperating witness brought cash to Boston Envio, represented the funds to be drug proceeds, and wired the money to the Dominican Republic.

Melo also is charged with theft of \$64,200 in United States currency, which relates to one transaction in which the cooperating witness supplied Melo with \$60,000 to be wired to the Dominican Republic and paid a \$4,200 remittal fee, but the money never arrived in the Dominican Republic. The charges against Garcia relate to ten occasions when Garcia handled transactions for the cooperating witness, each of which involved more than \$10,000 in cash, and Garcia failed to file a currency transaction report as required by federal law.

The indictment further alleges that between September 2004 and March 2005, Tejeda Andujar and another individual conspired to distribute at least 500 grams of cocaine. Tejeda Andujar also is charged with distributing cocaine on two specific occasions—December 16, 2004, and March 14, 2005.

The money laundering charges carry a maximum penalty of 20 years' imprisonment to be followed by 3 years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The currency reporting charges are punishable by up to 10 years' imprisonment to be followed by 3 years' supervised release, and a fine of \$500,000.

Theft of government property is punishable by up to 10 years' imprisonment, 3 years of supervised release and a \$250,000 fine. The drug conspiracy is punishable by at least 5 years' imprisonment up to 40 years' imprisonment, a \$2 million fine and at least 4 years, up to life, of supervised release. The substantive distribution counts are punishable by up to 20 years' imprisonment, a \$1 million fine, and at least 3 years, up to life, of supervised release.

The men were arrested Wednesday afternoon after another \$100,000 "sting" transaction had been conducted. In addition to the arrests, law enforcement agents also conducted a search of Boston Envio De Valores, Inc., and seized numerous documents, computers, and other items of evidence.

Arrests in the Dominican Republic

Acting in conjunction with their United States counterparts, the Dominican Republic National Police, with assistance from ICE Attaché Dominican Republic, ICE SAC/Boston, and ICE SAC/Miami, arrested seven individuals and executed several search warrants in Santo Domingo and Bani, Dominican Republic immediately following the pick-up of the \$100,000 in purported narcotics proceeds in Santo Domingo. Some of the individuals arrested are believed to be relatives of Tejeda Andujar, who operated **Peravinter**, an unlicensed money remittal business in Bani, Dominican Republic.

Garcia was released Thursday on a \$25,000 unsecured bond. The government asked that Melo and Tejeda Andujar be held in custody until their trial. Their detention hearing is scheduled for September 6, 2006.

The case was investigated by ICE, FBI and IRS. The Massachusetts Division of Banks and the Boston Police Department also provided invaluable assistance during the course of the investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sandra S. Bower of Sullivan's Drug Enforcement Task Force Unit.

The details contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendants are presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.